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REASONS WHY THE OATHS Should not be made A Part of the Teſt TO Proteſtant Diſſenters.

I. WE do humbly conceive, that becauſe theſe *Oaths* were Antiently made upon Occaſion of the *Conſpiracies* of *Papiſts* againſt the Government, and are now reviv'd upon the ſcore of the late Diſcovery of their *Horrid Plot*; and that ſince they only ought at any time to be adminiſtred in Caſe of Juſt Jealouſie or Suſpition had of any Perſon or Perſons: We, who are no *Papiſts*, but by our Faith and Doctrine *Repugnant* to all Popery; And We, who have never ſhown the leaſt *Diſallegiance* or *Unfaithfulneſs*, but on the Contrary have been patient and peaceable under all

 that

that Exceſs of Severity, that in ſeveral parts of this Nation hath been inflicted upon us, ought not to be brought under the *ſame Jealouſies* with the *Papiſts*: It is ſuſpecting an Integrity, that was never *Tainted*. For with ſubmiſſion, what is it but to ſay, The *Papiſts* have plotted againſt the King, Government and Proteſtant Religion; *therefore the* Quakers *and ſuch like Diſſenters that have not plotted, ſhall take the Oaths, to try and bind them, as if they had plotted?* This makes no Diſtinction, where really there is a great one. The Oaths were not revived upon the *Papiſts* till the *Plot* was diſcovered; pray why ſhould you effect us, or queſtion the Integrity of *Proteſtant-Diſſenters*? Let the known *Papiſts* be proved and teſted as *Papiſts*; but that can be no Reaſon why the known *Anti-Papiſts* or *Proteſtant-Diſſenters* ſhould be ſo teſted that are Unconcerned in the Occaſion of it.

II. We are not yet preferred by the Government to ſuch Charge, Truſt or Employment, for which ſuch Security is commonly required, and ſince we ever liv'd a Sober and Peaceable Life under the King and Government, being neither *Papiſts*, *Plotters* nor *Men in Power*, we do not ſee the Reaſon or Equity, as to us, why the *Oaths* ſhould be made a part of the *Teſt*.

☞ III. We conceive, we need not Swear to deny a *Supremacy* or to pay an *Obedience*, where our *Faith* and *Religion* teacheth us both; which are a ſtronger *Tie* upon our Conſciences, than all the *Oaths* in the World. And of the Truth of this we may appeal to your own Knowledge of our Converſations.

IV. We apprehend, that the *Oaths* anſwer not the Reaſon of their Impoſition, and therefore Uſeleſs; for the *Papiſts* we ſee, take them: and conſequently there is no Diſcrimination of *Papiſts* from *Proteſtants* by them. So that they ſerve rather to Diſtinguiſh, what *Proteſtant-Diſſenters* are Tender in taking theſe Oaths, *than to diſcover who are* Papiſts. But ſince the *Declaration* is of more weight to the *Papiſts* than the *Oaths*, becauſe that denyes their *Religion*, whereas the *Oaths* only deny the

the *Popes Supremacy* (which is not owned by the *Gallican* or *French Church*, that they now moſtly pretend to adhere to) it will evidently follow, that all thoſe *Proteſtant-Diſſenters*, who can ſubſcribe the Declaration, are not *Papiſts*, nor of the *Romiſh* Communion. In ſhort; Becauſe the *Papiſts* will ſooner take the *Oaths* than ſubſcribe the *Declaration*; and that the *Quakers* and other *Diſſenters* will ſooner ſubſcribe the *Declaration* than take the *Oaths*: And foraſmuch as the point in hand is to diſcriminate *Papiſts*, and not ſuch *Diſſenters*; the adding of the *Oaths*, when the *Declaration* will moſt Effectually do, may ſerve to enſnare the ſaid *Proteſtant-Diſſenters*, but not to diſcover the *Papiſts*, or ſecure the Government from them, which ought to be the only end of the Teſt.

Object. But it is objected, *That ſome* Papiſts *will not take the* Oaths, *and therefore they ought to be a part of the* Teſt.

To which we Anſwer, *Firſt*, That the *Concealed Papiſts*, or thoſe who are ſuſpected to be ſuch, are obſerv'd to *ſwallow* all, both *Oaths* and *Declaration* too, rather than bring themſelves under Notice at this time of the Day. And *Next*, It is plain Fact, that the Generality of the *Known Papiſts* alſo take them. So that ſtill theſe *Oaths* being made a part of the *Teſt*, rather ſhews that *Papiſts* will take the *Oaths*, than that they *diſcriminate who are Papiſts*: And here it may be worth your Conſideration, how much ſecurer you are from thoſe *Papiſts*, that do take the *Oaths*, than from thoſe that refuſe them. But admitting it to be a real Diſcrimination reſpecting a few *Papiſts*, yet we intreat you weigh, If the Number of the *Proteſtant-Diſſenters*, who may ſcruple taking theſe *Oaths*, is not *far greater*, than of thoſe *Papiſts* that may refuſe to take them: and if ſo, you will *loſe much more* than you will get by taking the *Oaths* into the *Teſt*.

V. Be pleaſed to conſider, that if you are not very Careful in this matter, by expoſing ſuch *Proteſtant-Diſſenters* to be reputed *Papiſts*, becauſe of not taking the *Oaths*, you may be ſaid, in a ſort, to make more *Papiſts* by one *Act*, than the *Popes* and their

Emiſſaries have done theſe *Six ſcore Years*; though they abhor Popery as much as you your ſelves can do. We hope, the Wiſdom of the Government will not thus ſuffer a great part of the Induſtrious people of the Nation to be vex'd & ruin'd for that which they are not; and at a time too, when it is your Intereſt to lend a hand to the *Weakeſt Proteſtant-Separatiſt* you have, againſt the *Church of Rome*; That ſo the Numbers of that Society may not be augmented, by enlarging that Scandalous Character to other Perſwaſions through the Prejudice, Falſe Policy or Ill Deſigns of any.

VI. Your making the *Oaths* a part of the *Teſt*, will be very particularly Injurious to ſuch *Diſſenters*; for you will puniſh them by Laws made upon Occaſion of *Popiſh Plots*, who are unconcern'd in the Guilt of them. This is in Shew to charge your *Canon* againſt *Papiſts*, but they will ('tis to be fear'd) be diſcharg'd upon *Proteſtant-Diſſenters*, as hath already been done: which is adding another *miſery* to them, whom you *ſhould relieve*, and making them loſe by the Diſcovery of the *Plot*, that would have been expos'd as well as your ſelves, if it had taken Effect: So that thoſe who would have ſuffer'd by the *Plot*, *muſt ſuffer as of the Party of the Plotters.* In ſhort, this is puniſhing one Party for the Fault of another, and extending the Penalty, where there is no Tranſgreſſion.

VII. Let it be conſider'd, that ſuch Diſſenters will be of all People the moſt Miſerable: For being expos'd to the Puniſhment of *Papiſts* and the Puniſhment of *Proteſtant-Diſſenters* too, they muſt needs be in a worſe Condition, than the *Papiſts*; for they will be at this rate ground between two *Mill-ſtones*. And this will rather deter *Papiſts* from embracing the Communion of any *Proteſtant-Diſſenters*, then excite them to approach ſo near to the *Church*, as to become *Proteſtant* in any Senſe: becauſe they will be expos'd to more Suffering, unleſs abſolute Churchmen, then now they are, as *Papiſts*. For both the Laws made againſt *Proteſtant-Diſſenters*, and the Laws made againſt *Popiſh Recuſants* have been executed upon *Proteſtant-Diſſenters*; but the

the particular Laws made againſt *Proteſtant-Diſſenters* were never inflicted upon the *Papiſts*.

VIII. But it is Objected by ſome, that we are *diſguiz'd Papiſts*, or that *Papiſts* are concealed amongſt us. To which we ſay, the *Declaration* will determine that; ſince (as was ſaid) the *Oaths* only deny the *Pope's Supremacy*, which ſome of themſelves pretend to diſown: But our *Declaration* denies both the *Pope's Supremacy and their Religion* too. Beſides, thoſe *Diſſenters* that ſcruple the *Oaths*, do it not upon the ſame Terms with the *Papiſts*; for they own no *forreign* Supremacy, which the *Papiſts* do. And to prove evidently, that it is no Trick or Ill deſign againſt the Government, *they refuſe to Swear in their own Right, having frequently loſt their Juſt Debts, and been greatly injur'd by other mens Unjuſt Claims, becauſe of not taking an Oath*: which is not the Practice of *Papiſts*.

IX. But there is one Reaſon never to be anſwered, why we can neither be *Papiſts*, nor *Popiſhly* affected, as we muſt needs be, if we ſeek to Conceal the *Papiſts* at ſo much hazard to our ſelves; and it is this, You have been pleaſed in Parliament to Complain of the growth of *Popery*, of the Non-executing of Laws made againſt *Papiſts*, and that ſome of the Miniſters of State were *Popiſhly* affected, and that things have generally been Tranſacted by them in favour of the *Papiſts*: On the contrary we have been great Sufferers, our Houſes broke open, our Goods riffled, and our Eſtates ſeized, and Treble values taken away from us by Laws made againſt *Papiſts*, under their Miniſtry. So that either we are no *Papiſts*, or ſuch State-Miniſters and Councils, whom you have reputed *Popiſh*, muſt not be ſuch; for none can think that they ſhould Exerciſe ſuch Severities upon People of the ſame Inclinations, when they were ſo indulgent to Perſons notoriouſly of that Profeſſion; but becauſe you believe they were ſo, you muſt needs interpret from their being more ſevere to us than any other People, that they reputed us moſt remote from *Popery*. What greater Demonſtration can we give, that we believe our ſelves, and are Sincere in

this

this matter, than the Hazards and Losses we are daily expos'd to?

X. We have always shewn a good and steady Affection to the Just, Civil and Protestant Interest of this Nation; and among other things, it may evidently appear in the late Election of the present Parliament, *having generally adhered to, and through all Difficulties given our Voices for those Persons, that have been of the best Reputation in their Country for Protestants and English men.* And indeed, there has been no such Discovery made these many years of the Inclinations of all Parties: which being well observ'd, it will perhaps appear, that We and the *Papists* have as little joyn'd in the same Choice of Members, as some *High Church-men* (our great Prosecutors) have done, who would notwithstanding have us accounted *Papists*. And we may further add, that since our giving our Voices in the said late Election for those Persons, which are known to be hearty for the *Protestant Religion* and *Civil Interest* of the Nation, we have been afresh severely persecuted in several places, and that as well by Laws made against *Papists* as Protestant Dissenters.

Lastly, We do here humbly offer a DECLARATION, and pray, that it may be receiv'd as a *Testimony* of our good Affection to the *Protestant Cause*, and as our *Assurance* to live a sober and peaceable Life under the present Government. And in case any among us shall be found false to our *Declaration* and *Engagement*, let such be punisht as *Perjured* Persons.

These are the *Reasons* we render, why the *Oaths* should not be made part of the *Test*.

A *Proteſtation* or *Declaration* to Diſtinguiſh *Proteſtant-Diſſenters* from *Popiſh-Recuſants.*

"I A. B. *do in the Preſence of Almighty God ſolemnly* "*profeſs, and in good Conſcience declare, It is my* "*real Judgment, That the* Church *of* Rome *is not the* "Church *of* Chriſt, *nor the* Pope *or Biſhop of* Rome "Chriſt's Vicar; *and that his or her Doctrines Of De-* "*poſing Heretical* Princes, *and Abſolving their* Subjects "*of their Obedience*; *Of* Purgatory *and* Prayers *for* "*the Dead*; *Of* Indulgences *and Worſhipping of* Ima-"ges; *Of Adoring and Praying to the* Virgin Mary *and* "*other Saints deceaſed*; *And of* Tranſubſtantiation, "*or changing the Elements of* Bread *and* Wine *into the* "Body *and* Blood *of Chriſt at or after the Conſecration* "*thereof by any Perſon whatſoever, are Falſe, Erroneous* "*and Contrary to the Truth of God declared in the Holy* "*Scriptures: And therefore the Communion of the ſaid* "*Church is* Superſtitious *and* Idolatrous.

"*And I do likewiſe ſincerely teſtifie and declare, that I do* "*from the bottom of my Heart deteſt and abhor all* Plots "*and* Conſpiracies, *that are or may be contrived againſt* "*the* King, Parliament *or People of this* Realm: *And I* "*do hereby Faithfully Promiſe, with God's Help, to live a So-*"*ber and Peaceable Life, as becometh a good* Chriſtian *and* "Proteſtant *to do. And all this I do* Acknowledge, Intend, "Declare & Subſcribe *without any Equivocation or men-*"*tal Reſervation, according to the true Plainneſs, Simplici-*"*ty and uſual ſignification of the Words.*

Witneſs my Hand.